



For immediate use

Following the Diaspora: Chinese Lives in Scotland

New website exploring multicultural lives in Scotland launches as part Bank of Scotland Connecting to Culture

A website that provides an intimate insight into the lives of people of Chinese origin who have made Scotland their home is now live.

Following the Diaspora: Chinese Lives in Scotland - eif.co.uk/diasporaproject – was created by artist **Pamela So** as part of the **Bank of Scotland Connecting to Culture** education programme and was inspired by themes in one of the theatre pieces in **Edinburgh International Festival 2009, *Diaspora***.

Bank of Scotland Connecting to Culture is a year-round programme of education and outreach work now in its second year. The programme consists of a series of theatre, dance, music and visual arts projects reaching over 1100 pupils in 40 Edinburgh schools. In addition, site specific projects offer over 10,000 adults the opportunity to take part in the Bank of Scotland Connecting to Culture programme.

As part of the 2009 programme, the Edinburgh International Festival commissioned three local artists from diverse ethnic backgrounds to work alongside the acclaimed director of *Diaspora*, Ong Keng Sen, and Theatreworks.

The website, *Following the Diaspora: Chinese Lives in Scotland*, is the contribution made by Scottish/Chinese artist Pamela So.

For the website, Pamela searched for people of Chinese descent in a journey which has taken her from her home in north Ayrshire, Scotland, to her ancestral home in Shunde, Guangzhou, China, and back to the most northerly shores of Scotland in Caithness and Sutherland. The result is an interactive portrait of several individuals who are proud to be

of Chinese descent and want to share their thoughts and experiences, giving a sense of what it is like to live within two cultures.

In the image galleries are scenes of homecomings, celebrations of weddings, Christmas and New Year, Scottish/Chinese style. They also offer glimpses of family albums and collections which reveal how Chinese domestic life incorporates Scottish cultural habits.

Many of the photographs have been taken by the participants themselves on visits to relatives in their homeland or of their own special interests. They include people drinking tea, drumming, golf and show jumping. Interviews of voices from Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan recently arrived or born in Scotland reveal the speaker's identity as clearly as any written history.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Diaspora, which receives its European premiere at The Edinburgh Playhouse on Saturday 15 August and is supported by Homecoming Scotland, presents a series of captivating personal stories spanning 2000 years of Chinese history. Brought to Edinburgh by acclaimed director Ong Keng Sen and Theatreworks, the piece is a celebration of the human spirit on an epic scale, told through layers of live music, performance, and stunning panoramic video.

Ong Keng Sen is the Leverhume Artist in Residence at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh.

The three commissioned artists - Pamela So, Rabiya Choudhry and Pio Abad – each developed individual projects as responses to diasporas in Scotland. This project was made possible by the Scottish Arts Council Black and Ethnic Minority Artists Bursaries fund - The Scottish Arts Council supported these projects through the Black and Ethnic Minority Artists Bursaries fund.

Rabiya Choudhry created a mural in the playground of Preston Street Primary School showing a fantastical world - a feature of Choudhry's work - in which she creates recognisable and humorous qualities in the characters that inhabit its colourful environment. In addition a short film developed with Ong Ken Seng about her family and life growing up in Glasgow forms a part of TheatreWorks Singapore's production of *Diaspora* at the Playhouse on 15th and 16th August.

Pio Abad, interested in creating a dialogue between the personal narratives of the individuals that have settled in Edinburgh and the narratives contained within the architecture of the city itself, has collaborated with two organisations that work with migrant communities in Edinburgh. The vestibule of the Multicultural Family Base in Leith has been transformed by an installation and a charming chess set has been created for the Polish Community Centre Swietlica in Leith.

Diaspora

Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 August 8.00pm, The Edinburgh Playhouse
Tickets from £8

Supported by Homecoming Scotland, Visiting Arts, National Arts Council (Singapore) and Singapore Arts Festival
eif.co.uk/diaspora

Hub Tickets +44 (0)131 473 2000
Online booking and information at www.eif.co.uk

For more information please contact the Edinburgh International Festival press office: +44 (0)131 473 2020 or press@eif.co.uk

For further information on **Bank of Scotland** please contact Jenny Mungall on + 44 (0)141 204 7970

Homecoming Scotland 2009 is a Scottish Government initiative managed by EventScotland in partnership with VisitScotland. Homecoming Scotland 2009 seeks to motivate people of Scottish descent, as well as those who simply love Scotland, to come home and join us in a national celebration of our culture, heritage and the many great contributions Scotland has given the world: www.homecomingscotland2009.com

If you would like more information on Homecoming Scotland please contact Leon Thompson, EventScotland Communications Manager, 0131 472 2312 / leon.thompson@eventscotland.org

Diaspora is also part of the Singapore Showcase in Edinburgh 2009. For more information visit www.nac.gov.sg/singaporeshowcase